'Global Warming is a Headf**k': Using Cultural Journalism and Oral History to Engage with the Lived Experience of Climate Change[1]

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> 'The longer I've spent working on global warming—the greatest challenge humans have ever faced—the more I've come to see it as essentially a *literary* problem. A technical and scientific challenge, yes; an economic quandary, yes; a political dilemma, surely. But centrally? A crisis in metaphor, in analogy, in understanding.'
>
> —Bill McKibben, journalist and climate activist

> 'No more elegant tool exists to describe the human condition than the personal narrative.'
>
> —Marjorie Shostak

> 'global warming/climate change is a headfuck'
>
> —@alexmatter, Twitter

Introduction: The Super Wicked Problem of Climate Change

There is an overwhelming scientific consensus on the subject of climate change. Ninety-seven per cent of all climate scientists agree that climate change is real, that it is caused by human activities, and that is already underway; the other 3% are non-committal (NASA, 'Consensus'). Climate change, however, is not just a scientific issue. As well as being a physical phenomenon, Professor of Climate and Culture Mike Hulme stresses that climate change is 'simultaneously a social phenomenon' (xxv). As such, climate change—or rather the *concept* of climate change—has the potential to affect almost every aspect of our lives, from our philosophical/theological conceptions of what it means to be human, through to the countless (un)ethical consumer choices we are faced with every day. In this broader cultural context, there is unavoidable contestation and conflict about the implications of climate science, as well as what climate change ultimately 'means'—and, more importantly, what we should be doing about it.

In fact, the ramifications of climate change for the future of life on this planet (or lack thereof) are so complicated and all-encompassing that some theorists have dubbed it a 'wicked problem': a situation 'of mind-bending complexity, characterised by "contradictory certitudes" and thus defying elegant, consensual solutions' (Rayner, in Hulme xxi-xxii). In recent years, this status has been upgraded to 'super wicked problem' (Levin et al 123-52), in recognition of the fact that we

[1] An early form of this paper was delivered at the ASLEC-ANZ Conference, 'Affective Habitus: New Environmental Histories of Botany, Zoology and Emotions', Australian National University, 19-21 June 2014.

are approaching a series of catastrophic and irreversible climatic 'tipping points', and running out of time to deal with them. Crossing any of these thresholds would 'lock in' runaway global warming of not just two degrees but upwards of six degrees: enough to disrupt the physical basis of most life on earth, triggering untold wars and humanitarian crises in the process (Dyer 2010). Climate change is arguably the most incomprehensibly complex conundrum that the world has ever had to contend with: an urgent-yet-paralysing situation that simultaneously demands and resists all manner of totalising solutions. This daunting formulation helps explain why the 'super wicked problem' of climate change is becoming the worst nightmare of experts everywhere.

The Super Awkward Problem of Climate Change journalism

Climate change also poses profound questions for contemporary journalistic practice. As Bill McKibben said in 2013, climate change 'is not just the biggest crisis ever, it's the biggest story ever' (Bagley, 'Environment Reporters'). Journalism is an essential part of the 'cultural circuit' (Hulme 221) that determines how people understand and thus experience climate change. Scholars and practitioners of news production, however, argue that the 'narrative' of catastrophic climate change is a profoundly 'awkward fit for the conventions and institutions that make up today's media' (Gess 57). In an Australian context, the Murdoch press and its deliberate distortion and obfuscation of climate science for political-ideological reasons is only the most blatant example of this (Bacon 2011; Bacon 2013; Bacon and Nash 2012; Chubb and Nash 2012). At a broader structural level, the bulk of newsroom journalism, with its focus on the here-and-now and its preference for pre-packaged narratives of conflict and celebrity (Gess 54), struggles to engage with the climate change 'story'– a story that is baffling, incremental, emotionally fraught and of extraordinarily long duration. Conventional journalism's failure to do justice to this 'super wicked' situation, then, can be seen a twin failure: of interpretation, and of storytelling.

Telling new kinds of climate stories: cultural journalism and oral history

Faced with this paradox, I argue that other journalistic and narrative forms can complement the work of mainstream reporting, providing the public with longer, 'slower' and more nuanced climate change stories. The practices of long-form cultural journalism and oral history share key similarities (Feldstein 1). Both prioritise the quotidian experiences of ordinary people, and focus on the broader cultural contexts that all news events occur within (Bird 302; Abrams 154–161). As such, they are appropriate methodologies to help expand our understanding of the cultural and historical dimensions of climate change.

For the purposes of this article, 'cultural journalism' is not to be confused with 'arts journalism' (Green 2010); nor does it mean '*cross-cultural* journalism' (Olmstead 1991). It is also not limited to the cultural-journalism-as-pedagogy practices that originated in the 1960s with Eliot Wigginton's groundbreaking high school *Foxfire* project (Olmstead 1988). The definition of cultural journalism most relevant to this discussion is articulated by journalism scholar Maarit Jaakkola in two useful ways: firstly, as 'the journalistically sound production of literary journalism or nonfiction', via 'the use of fictional techniques in journalistic writing' (Jaakkola 6); and secondly, as 'the anthropological method of writing about communities and cultures in a

journalistic context', which has the 'potential to increase understanding among different groups of people' (Olmstead, in Jaakkola 6). While Jaakkola characterises cultural journalism practice as essentially *anthropological*, this approach is equally relevant to sociological investigation. Scholar Jason Waite identifies 'two different orientations from which cultural journalism can be practiced': *introspective*/sociological, documenting 'the customs, values and traditions of one's own community'; and *extrospective*/anthropological, a comparable process applied 'to a completely different culture'. (49-50)

The practice of oral history is succinctly described on the Oral History Victoria website as 'the recording of memories of people's unique life experiences' ('What is Oral History?'). Historian Lynn Abrams offers a more theoretical definition of oral history as 'a practice, a method of research. It is the act of recording the speech of people . . . and then analysing their memories of the past' (1). Typically, oral history interviews are in-depth and of long duration, generating a narrative account of the participant's experiences over their entire life, or substantial portions of it. Sometimes these interviews focus on a particular theme or topic (such as, for example, people's lived experiences of climate change). Abrams points out that "oral history" can refer both to a particular *process* of interviewing, i.e. asking people at length about their past, and/or to the *product* of such interviews, i.e. written narratives (2).

Theory in practice

In the work that follows, oral history has been utilised as a *process* to generate a range of oral testimonies, which have subsequently been transcribed, edited and arranged into a hybrid cultural journalism *product*. This takes the form of a collage-style narrative interweaving the story of five Melbourne residents' personal experiences of climate change, and culminating in anecdotes about the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires (Australia's deadliest extreme weather event to date). These oral history interviews were conducted between October 2013 and April 2014, with people who were at that time residents of Melbourne's 'green belt' – the Greens-voting inner suburbs north of the CBD. There are purposeful demographic similarities with the interviewees: they are all Anglo-Australian, tertiary-educated 30-somethings, with progressive values, left-wing politics and, in some cases, a history of environmental activism. In relation to climate change, these interviewees all belong to 'segment' of society that Leiserowitz et al describes as 'the Alarmed' (5). People in this group:

> are very certain global warming is occurring, understand that it is human-caused and harmful, and strongly support societal action to reduce the threat. They discuss the issue more often, seek more information about it, and are more likely to act as global warming opinion leaders than the other segments. (Leiserowitz 5)

Four out of five of the interviews were conducted in the interviewee's Melbourne share houses; the exception is my interview with Pat Grant, which was conducted in Bali, Indonesia, during a writers' festival.

ORAL HISTORY CASE STUDIES:

‘No matter what you do, it’s all fucked’: Lived Experiences of Climate Change in Melbourne’s Green Belt

‘Hey! I control the weather!’

MICHAEL PULSFORD: We went camping a lot when I was a kid. We didn’t have much money, so it was kind of the most straightforward way of going for a holiday. We were always going camping, and I always thought it was ridiculous—I wanted to go to resorts and things. We went camping this one time when I was about ten, I think it was in the Flinders Ranges [in South Australia] and one night I was sitting up around the fire, and the smoke was blowing in my eyes, and I remember just telling the wind to blow in a different direction – and it did. I used the cardinal directions. I’d say, ‘Go north,’ and it would go north. I was like, ‘Oh, that’s pretty cool.’ ‘Go south by southwest,’ and it would go south by southwest—and I was like, ‘hey, this is pretty cool’. I spent the whole evening telling the wind what direction to go in. Sometimes it would take about thirty seconds, but it would always happen. And I was like, ‘Hey! I control the weather!’ *[Laughs.]* I felt like a wizard.

But then I went to sleep, and that night the wind, well I got the sense it was offended: it was this really eerie, noisy, creepy like ‘*Woo ooo ooo*’ howling kind of sound, all night, and I woke up and I just couldn’t get back to sleep, and I felt really—afraid, like in a fairy tale or one of those books that freak kids out where you get some power and then you magically offend something without knowing that you’re doing it, and there’s some kind of retribution. I was really afraid. I got up, and I walked out into this wilderness, and I was like ‘I’m sorry, I’m really sorry! I won’t do it again I promise, I really really won’t do it again!’ Then I went back to bed. And I don’t remember what happened, but I do remember thinking, I’m not gonna mess with that again . . . ’ I might’ve tried it on another night, just testing the waters a bit, but it didn’t work.

‘I started understanding what was up on the news . . .’

PAT GRANT: I remember vividly the first time I heard about climate change. I remember sitting in front of the TV, and hearing the words ‘Greenhouse Effect’ and ‘Ozone Layer’. I was, like, eight. You know when you’d look at the news and it was gibberish, like another language? It was that age. And what I believe happened was, there’d been a very quick advance in my understanding of a certain kind of formal language, and then I started understanding what was up on the news. I remember the terms, ‘Greenhouse Effect’ and ‘Ozone Layer’. I assumed they were the same problem. There were a few moments I clearly remember that destabilised my view of the world. One was the day I asked my mum what death was. I said, ‘You only die if someone shoots you, right?’
And she was like, ‘Nah, everyone dies.’
And I was, ‘Aw fuck! I can’t sleep now . . .’
Then one day dad told us about nuclear winter, I was six, and I was like, ‘Dude, that’s fucked …’

And then, the climate change on TV, and realising that we're not gonna be okay—or it's very likely that we're not gonna be okay. So maybe those three things all came together. When you've only been around for eight years, it's a bit of a shock to realise that things aren't always going to stay as they are.

'Even the drama teacher was talking about it'

SAM HOFFMANN: I heard about climate change when I was sixteen, I think, so that'd be 1993. I grew up in Canberra, [in Australian Capital Territory], and Canberra's relatively onto it with that stuff: information goes like wildfire. My parents had friends who were academics, and your teachers are all tied into ANU, and it's all very accessible. The teachers are intellectuals, they've all got their Masters or something. I remember my English teacher talking about it, and my science teacher—even the drama teacher was talking about it. From then on I knew it was CO_2 that was the problem. So I vowed never to drive a car.

'I wanted to help … I wanted to fk up oil companies'**

PAT: I seem to remember in high school, looking at climate change as a sick opportunity to be some sort of hero character: you know, to be a good person by fixing that problem. And I mean 'sick' in the *ill* way, rather than in the surfer way that I often use. Sick as in *disgusting* opportunity, like, you know, *queasy*. I wanted to help . . . I wanted to fuck up oil companies or something like that.

'I think we need to start buying property in Tasmania . . .'

CLARE WHITE: I grew up on a farm forty-minutes northwest of Toowoomba [in Queensland]. I actually only spent five years on that farm, but it basically shaped my life. I don't know in psychology if that's particularly formative, but it was so influential to who I am. There was a massive drought in the 80s. One thing that happened in this time, as well as experiencing the drought, is that I basically felt a spiritual connection with nature. I used to go out to the bush – we had this river, and I'd just hang out in nature, and that formed my connection with my spirituality and connection with God through nature. The river was getting low, and people were suffering financially, including my family. So I guess I noticed that things in nature were suffering, but through very innocent eyes. I didn't really go, 'Oh, that's brown there, it's supposed to be green . . . .' I didn't even know about climate change until I went to university, but I was worried about seeing people destroy the environment: hearing stories about Rio Tinto's mines, how they were fucking up nature, that kind of stuff. So it was more about natural resource issues. Local stuff. The news I'd be watching was from Queensland, and it's really polarising, the environment stuff—it's very much 'industry versus the natural environment' So I think that's what was affecting me when I was a teenager, and why I was responding emotionally. When I went to university, I was like, 'I'm gonna be a lawyer for Greenpeace and take down the multinationals.'

And *then*, this big event happened for me: I started studying my Masters, at Melbourne Uni. I did a climate change politics course as part of my Masters, and I had to read and summarise in quite a lot of detail, the 2007 IPCC report for Australia and summarise it in quite a lot of detail . . . I read it, and I didn't sleep properly for two weeks—I had an anxiety attack. I *freaked out*. I was so scared. That was the moment when I realised: this is really *soon*, and it's *really likely*. [The IPCC report] had really strong stats around the sea level rise by 2100—which they've now increased *again*—and how much that would influence Australia and Australian cities. And I started making contingency plans for my family—calling my sister Lou and saying things like, 'I think we need to start buying property in Tasmania' and 'We need somewhere that's for our family and *safe*, and way back from the sea, so we can grow food when the shit hits the fan . . .'

And my family were like, 'You're a little *crazy*'. My Mum calls me, and she's like, *[stern voice]* 'Louise tells me you can't sleep because you're worried about climate change . . . now what's going on?' *[Laughs.]* And I was like, 'This science is really, really scary Mum, and it's *real*, and . . .' I didn't sleep properly for a fortnight. I mean for the first night or two, I didn't even sleep *at all*. I was having an actual *anxiety attack*. Before then I was like, *[sing-song voice]* 'Yeah, I know all about climate change, I've studied it like ten years ago. Most people are only finding out about it now, but I studied it in the 90s, and I know about climate change.' But I didn't . . . the assignment forced me to look at the detail, which was a changing moment for me. And then I, I don't know how, but I kind of . . . stopped thinking about it.

'So I kind of, I just … flipped out.'

SAM: Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006) smashed my fucken head. That got me. I'd read about it all before, but *seeing* it . . . particularly the graphs. The graphs are visual descriptors, and you go, 'Ok, *now* I get the concept, I can understand it *literally*'. Yep, you got the numbers, great. But until I see the exponential rise of carbon dioxide, and the exponential rise of temperature . . . that's when you freak out. That was also the same time I found out my partner was pregnant. It was literally about three weeks after. So I kind of, I just . . . flipped out. I think the status of Al Gore got me. Like, he's kind of handsome and *cool*, and he has moral authority. Whereas everything from then on has been basically a whole bunch of bullshit. It doesn't hold the same amount of weight. It just feels like, *An Inconvenient Truth* paved the way for some hope, some optimism; the GFC fucking kicked it in the balls. And then Abbott getting into power, has kicked it—there's no more balls left to kick.

'Everything's made of wood—except for the forest'

PAT: I own a house now and I know a bit more about building materials—like the reason wood is so expensive in Australia is because we've almost stopped cutting down forests. Almost. But over here in Bali, everything's made of solid timber. And I just can't imagine that it's from anywhere except Sumatra or Borneo. That's one of the things about Bali that gives me the willies. Every time you sit down on a fucking chair here—and they're all uncomfortable chairs too, cos they're wood *[laughs]* . . . I know from riding bikes around Indonesia, not just Bali but Sumbawa and Sumatra, there's supposed to be trees everywhere—but there's no fucken trees *anywhere*. I've

actually never been to an old forest in Indonesia, but you know something's wrong when everything's made of wood—except for the forest. *[Laughs grimly.]* If we're talking about us all surviving, we need to keep those carbon sinks . . . and we're not really, are we?

I can bury the fear pretty easily . . . the future is so complex that I can always just not worry about it, if I can't get my head around it. So I don't get that future anxiety that I see a lot of people getting. But the *dishonesty*, I always have knee-jerk reactions towards dishonesty, especially fucken lies that are pretty, like the beautiful wooden chairs . . . *[laughs]* And that's what gives me a visceral reaction. It fills me with this dread and hollowness, that we're just fucken liars, and we're lying to ourselves, and we're lying to each other, and we're all gonna get fucked by our own lies, and that's just what people are, y'know? *[Laughs.]* And that kind of short-term thinking is what's . . . and that's really sad. But it's not fear. It's more just disgust.

'It was that day, that insanely hot day . . .'

STEVE MUSHIN: I was arriving on a plane from NZ. It was about five o'clock in the afternoon, and as the plane pulls to a stop at the air bridge the captain says, 'Welcome to Melbourne, outside we have a balmy 45.7 degrees . . .' It was that day, that insanely hot day. I remember getting home, being in the garden, and thinking, 'This feels like I'm facing a hair dryer'. That hot, hot wind buffeting into your face. Those kinds of moments make me think, 'Far out, this is *crazy*, and it's only going to get worse . . . clearly we have got to leave Australia, because it's just not going to be possible to live here . . .'

'A fortress of lushness'

SAM: My daughter was just one-year old at the time. I was still with my partner back then, and we lived in Heidelberg [Melbourne], so we could actually see the smoke from our house. It was really extreme temperatures . . . and I remember the flip-out on the TV about it. My partner said, 'Let's just go to my parents' house,' which has a pool—and I thought, 'Hey, this is great!' So ultimately that day was a mixture between the flip-out of the fires, and me sitting in a pool drinking beer, having a great time. The house was in Balwyn, which is really nice—nice and *leafy*. It was really nice to be able to enjoy the lusciousness of eastern suburbs Melbourne. We were in a total fortress, a fortress of lushness. I didn't actually realise what was going on that much. I kind of switched off from it. But I remember how hot it was. We sat in the pool early in the morning, but then when those winds started to rip through, it was like, 'Fuck, we can't even be outside.' So we ended up sitting inside, playing board games.

'The fires were starting—but we didn't know'

CLARE: The Premier was on the news, saying, 'Saturday's going to be a really bad day. Buckle down, don't use public transport,' whatever. So on Saturday my boyfriend Matt and I put sheets and blankets all over our windows, then we went down to Jan Juc beach [southwest of Melbourne], to get out of the heat. I remember driving down pretty early in the morning, but already it was like

Doomsday—the wind, and dust, and just craziness. At Jan Juc we were frolicking in the water, you know, 'Ohhoho life is grand!', while the fires were starting—but we didn't know. When we went back to Matt's parents' beach-house for dinner, we turned on the TV, and it was all over the TV. We were like, 'Holy shit.' At that point a couple of people were already dead. We ended up watching TV for the rest of the night, freaking out.

'It totally flips you out. You feel frozen …'

SAM: That night we were looking at the news, and it was, 'Wow, it's like a bomb was dropped.' And I looked up and there was . . . smoke. So, that was my experience of that particular day. I mean, it was nice to feel relatively protected, but I've always been aware that there's heavy shit going on—and I just wanted to look after my kid. That was my first response. For that moment, caring about anybody else was just out the window. I think it was the combination of the flip-out of having a kid, and being aware that there are going to be changes—that's what was freaking me out. It flips you out. It totally flips you out. You feel frozen. I think that with my situation, it's almost like no matter what you do, it's all fucked. Like, you get a job, you get a house, to get *security*, for the *kid*, which means you're tied into the *system*, which is fucking the *planet*, but it's giving your kid security, in a system which doesn't seem to be changing, and it all seems like it's hurtling towards complete apocalypse, like, systematically . . . I mean that's just my opinion, but . . .

'The topsoil had been burnt. There was no *topsoil* !'

CLARE: I came back on Sunday and went into work [at the Department of Sustainability and Environment] on Monday and started working on the fires. Monday morning the fire team came upstairs in distress: 'Holy shit we need help! Everybody who can come and help!' So I went and started working on logistics for the fires. People would call into State Control Centre and say, 'We need . . .' something-or-other. Somebody needs to get their medication filled. 'Take this weird thing to the helicopter pilot's house'—because the pilot's on his sleeping rotation, and we needed to take it to him. 'We need two hundred towels.' The New South Wales fire fighters arrived without their towels!

A year later, I went through the forest in Warrandyte near Kinglake with some Parks Vic guys, to inspect our trapping sites. I saw how badly the bush was burnt. That was really full-on. Mostly you'd hear about the human side, which is horrific. But I didn't have anyone personally who . . . I mean, colleagues of mine defended their house and were okay. But going out to Kinglake and seeing the bush a year later, and the trees weren't coming back . . . it was like being in a ghost town. There was nothing there. The topsoil had been burnt. Gone. There was no *topsoil*! There were no animals. There were only a few ants and zanthorreas. Grass trees and ants and that's it. Normally a fire will spark all this new growth, so you'd see like green shoots in the ground, green shoots coming out of trees, lots of life coming back, but it just wasn't there. It was really scary. Eerie.

Those Parks Vic [Parks Victoria] guys had never seen it before, that damage. The seed stock was gone from the soil, so it couldn't regenerate. They might have to do, like, *seed bombs*, to get the seeds back out there. It's beyond what the natural system can bounce back from.

Some conclusions: super wicked problem as 'headfk'**

There is no shortage of grim dramatic irony present in the testimony above. For example, when Clare White's anxiety about projected sea level rises prompts her to advise her family, 'I think we need to start buying property in Tasmania', this ignores Tasmania's own particular exposure to climate change. The densely-forested state is at high risk of climate-change-related bushfires—a fact underlined by the recent 'global tragedy' of the January 2016 bushfires in northern Tasmania's World Heritage area (Mathiesen 2016). Fire ecologist, David Bowman, notes that these fires have produced a level of '[eco]system collapse' comparable to the 2009 Black Saturday fires, whose scary/eerie aftermath left Clare traumatised (Bowman qtd. in Hunt 2016). Similarly, Steve Mushin's horrified reaction to the extreme heat of Black Saturday—'clearly we have got to leave Australia, because it's just not going to be possible to live here'—begs the (unanswerable) question: in a climate-changed future, where *will* it be safe for 'us' to live?

Meanwhile, Sam Hoffmann's testimony dramatises an inner struggle to find an ethical way to live with the 'difficult new knowledge' of climate change within the constraints of a capitalist society (Smith et al 6). This is super wicked problem theory in action at a personal level: Sam's conundrum is 'characterised by "contradictory certitudes" and thus defies elegant, consensual solutions'—and his situation is made more acutely distressing by the fact that time is running out. However, even the phrase 'super wicked problem' with its hyperbolic compound adjective, fails to fully convey the visceral and ambivalent effects/affects that climate change provokes in people on a daily basis. I contend that there is a vulgar neologism that better captures how people engaged in climate issues ('the Alarmed') often experience the super wicked problem of life under climate change: *headfuck*.

'Headfuck' is defined at *Urban Dictionary* as '[a] difficult or awkward situation with no obvious correct course of action, literally something which fucks with you[r] head'; and the 'feeling you get when an idea or concept is beyond your understanding' ('Headfuck'). The phrase is also 'used to describe *the idea or concept* that causes head-fucking' (ibid)—i.e., a mind-bendingly complex issue such as climate change. The user-moderated online dictionary *Wiktionary* defines 'headfuck' similarly, as '[a]nything confusing, that interferes with the usual functioning of the brain' ('Headfuck'). *Wiktionary* notes that the term is 'vulgar'; but while it is yet to be recognised by the *Oxford Dictionary*, the *Macquarie Dictionary* defines 'headfuck' as: 'an experience which destroys one's previously held beliefs and expectations'. In the *Macquarie* interpretation, a 'headfuck' is a type of event that is both traumatic and ontologically unsettling.

Taken together, the various attributes of 'headfuckery' are similar to those of 'super wicked problems': difficulty; awkwardness; lack of clarity; the need to act coupled with uncertainty about any course of action; pervasive confusion. The phrase 'headfuck' however arguably adds a dimension of *lived experience* to this definition. The term brings with it a sense of cognitive difficulty (something 'that interferes with the usual functioning of the brain'), producing unpleasant sensations, such as anxiety and distress, even trauma. The personal narratives above illustrate a variety of climate 'headfuck' moments in action. While first-hand experiences of extreme weather events are an obvious trigger for climate 'headfucks', they are not the only cause. Sometimes these crises are precipitated indirectly, by the consumption of media about climate change: Sam watching *An Inconvenient Truth*; Clare reading the 2007 IPCC report. In other cases,

the catalyst for a climate 'headfuck' can be more oblique or seemingly tangential. For example, Pat Grant's pre-existing knowledge about deforestation in Indonesia changes the 'meaning' of the solid timber furniture he sees all around Bali. For Pat, an uncomfortable wooden chair is transformed into a depressing symbol of humanity's failure to preserve the world's vital 'carbon sinks' and thus attempt to prevent catastrophic warming.

In all these cases, the result is the same: a *climate headfuck*. (Clare: 'I didn't sleep properly for two weeks . . . I *freaked out*'. Pat: 'It fills me with this dread and hollowness'; '[it] gives me the willies'. Sam: '*An Inconvenient Truth* smashed my fucken head . . . I just flipped out.') This is not an abstract policy problem or intellectual exercise. It is the thought-process itself; an *affective* as well as cognitive process. It is a felt and lived experience, often painfully so: '*literally* something which fucks with you[r] head'. The climate 'headfuck' is a metaphor for contemporary climate angst, struggling to become real.

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